



LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

510 S. Vermont Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90020-1975. (213) 738-2981. <http://openspacedistrict.lacounty.info>

October 15, 2013

The Honorable Board of Directors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

ADOPTED

REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

2-P October 15, 2013

Sachi A. Hamai
SACHI A. HAMAI
SECRETARY

Dear Directors:

AMEND THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT LIST PURSUANT TO SECTION (3), SUBSECTION (d) OF THE SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS PROPOSITION OF 1996, ALLOCATE SPECIFIED EXCESS GRANT FUNDS AVAILABLE TO THE THIRD SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT AND AUTHORIZE AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION OF AN EXCESS FUNDS GRANT TO THE MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY FOR THE ROCKY LEDGE ACQUISITION PROJECT IN THE UNINCORPORATED AREA OF TOPANGA CANYON (THIRD DISTRICT - 3 - VOTE)

SUBJECT

Approval of the recommended actions will allocate \$56,000 in Specified Excess Funds available to the Third Supervisorial District to enable the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority to purchase 6.28 acres in the unincorporated area of Topanga Canyon.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

1. Find the proposed Rocky Ledge Acquisition Project categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act because the project consists of acquisition of land to preserve existing natural conditions, including plant and animal habitats, and for the reasons stated herein and the reasons reflected in the record of the project.
2. Amend the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's project list, most recently amended on March 19, 2013, to add the acquisition of a 6.28 acre parcel of land in the unincorporated area of Topanga Canyon in the Third Supervisorial District.

3. Allocate \$56,000 of Specified Excess Funds available to the Third Supervisorial District to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for a grant to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the acquisition of 6.28 acres of land in the unincorporated area of Topanga Canyon.
4. Authorize the Director of Parks and Recreation, acting in his capacity as Director of the Regional Park and Open Space District, to award a grant in the amount of \$56,000 after the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy has assigned its right to apply for the funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority and when applicable conditions have been met; and to administer the grant as of the date of this action and pursuant to the procedures in the Procedural Guide for the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy; otherwise funds shall remain in the Excess Funds account.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approval of the recommended actions will add to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's (SMMC) project list, a parcel of land in the unincorporated area of Topanga Canyon, and allocate \$56,000 of Specified Excess Funds pursuant to the Safe Neighborhood Parks Proposition of 1996 for a grant to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) to acquire the subject parcel.

The proposed project consists of the purchase of a 6.28 acre parcel, bordered on the south by Dix Canyon Creek, a blueline stream, and bordered on the north by the 20.66 acre Rocky Ledge property acquired in January 2011 by the MRCA (see attachment I), for preservation as open space and wildlife habitat. The subject property is home to vital communities of chaparral and riparian plants. The total project budget is estimated at \$295,000 which consists of \$182,000 in Third Supervisorial District Proposition 62 funds, \$30,000 in donations, \$27,000 in MRCA Coastal Mitigation funds, and the recommended \$56,000 in Specified Excess Funds.

It is also recommended that the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation, in his capacity as Director of the Regional Park and Open Space District (Director), be authorized to award a grant after the SMMC assigns its right to apply for the funds to the MRCA and when applicable conditions have been met; and to administer the grant for grantee qualifications, consistency between the project and requirements of the 1996 Proposition, as well as grantee agreement with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements for the project; and to administer the grant under procedures previously approved by your Board.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The proposed recommendations further the Board approved County Strategic Plan Goals of Operational Effectiveness (Goal 1) by funding the acquisition of additional land for preservation as open space in the unincorporated area of Topanga Canyon in the Third Supervisorial District.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Sufficient appropriation for the grant, in the amount of \$56,000, is budgeted in the Third Supervisorial District's portion of the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space Districts' Excess Funds Project Fund, HD6.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The 1996 Proposition requires that agencies to which funds were allocated under the Safe Neighborhood Parks Propositions of 1992 and 1996 have encumbered all such funds before they may receive grants of Excess Funds. SMMC and MRCA have each met this requirement.

The 1996 Proposition requires that funds provided to SMMC be expended “solely for projects approved by the Board, pursuant to such criteria as the Board may, in its discretion, adopt,” provided that those projects are identified in SMMC’s annual work program transmitted to the Governor and State Legislature and as may be amended from time to time, after noticed public hearings held in November of 2003 and August of 2004.

The 1996 Proposition further provides that your Board may disapprove a project within the boundaries of a city only upon a finding that the acquisition or improvement may impact access to or use of a site identified or proposed for present or future sanitary landfill purposes. In addition, your Board previously has adopted procedural requirements requiring a review of proposed SMMC projects relative to their impact on existing or proposed highways, and their consistency with General or Area Plans.

The proposed acquisition project meets the procedural requirements of the 1996 Proposition and has been reviewed in accordance with SMMC’s revised Procedural Guide, adopted by your Board on June 17, 1997.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) has found that the proposed acquisition of the property will not involve nor affect any existing or potential landfill sites or accesses thereto (see Attachment II). DPW has, however, found in its review of the impact on any planned County roads or highways that the subject parcel fronts Tuna Canyon Road, a limited secondary highway on the Los Angeles County Highway Plan with an existing 80 feet of road right of way. In addition to the existing road right of way, there is an existing slope easement along the property on Tuna Canyon Road that shall remain.

The Department of Regional Planning (DRP) researched the proposed parcel for acquisition, consulted with County Counsel and noted no inconsistencies or lack of conformity between the parcel and its status relative to the applicable County planning documents (see Attachment III.)

The 1996 Proposition provides a method for determining each fiscal year the amount of funds available in the following fiscal year to fund capital improvement projects in addition to the amounts specifically identified for projects in the Safe Neighborhood Parks Propositions of 1992 and 1996. The recommended acquisitions would be funded from the Excess Funds available to the Third Supervisorial District from Excess Funds available for specified projects.

The Board may establish additional conditions on grants of Excess Funds. The Director would be authorized to award a grant when all applicable conditions have been met.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

All public agency projects funded by the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District are required to comply with CEQA as a condition of the grant. The lead agency is responsible for preparing the appropriate environmental documentation for the project. MRCA is the lead agency for the Rocky Ledge Acquisition Project.

The proposed Rocky Ledge Acquisition Project is categorically exempt from CEQA according to Section 15325 (a) of the State CEQA Guidelines and Class 25 (a) of the County’s Environmental

Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines, Appendix G, because the proposed project consists of acquisition of land to preserve existing natural conditions, including plant and animals.

CONTRACTING PROCESS

A Grant Project Agreement will be entered into and administered under authority delegated to the Director and pursuant to SMMC's Procedural Guide approved by your Board in 1997 and used since then for the administration of similar grant projects. Prior to execution, the Grant Project Agreement will be reviewed and approved as to form by County Counsel.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

Approval of these recommendations will authorize the Director to award a grant to the MRCA for the acquisition of a parcel in the unincorporated area of Topanga Canyon. It will have no impact on any other District-funded project.

CONCLUSION

Please instruct the Executive Officer-Clerk of the Board to return one conformed copy of this action to the Chief Executive Office, Capital Projects Division, and to the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Russ Guiney", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

RUSS GUINEY

Director

RG:JB

WO:AJ

c: Chief Executive Office
County Counsel
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors